

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

News You
Can Use

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A NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS—COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM AND THE IDAHO COMMUNITY FORESTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL

What is the number one reason for the early demise of planted trees? Read below and save money!

Coordinator's Column

Beyond Survival – Planting Trees that Thrive – or, it's not about the guarantee period

Planting season is upon us – that time when we transition trees from their temporary digs in the nursery to their permanent home in the landscape. It's the most important time in a tree's life and we have just one opportunity to do it right. Though we may not realize it, most of us who plant trees – homeowners, volunteers, municipal staff and even landscape professionals – do so in ways that ultimately lead to the tree's premature failure.

That's a strong statement and there are many who will disagree. But research and post-mortem evaluations of trees increasingly support this assessment. The most widespread problem – planting too deeply – is epidemic across the globe. Look at the trees in your city – if there is no discernable flaring at their bases, they are likely too deep.

Why is planting depth so critical? Instead of growing down and out into the top layer of soil as in nature, the roots of trees planted too deeply grow up and out. Since trunk and roots are now at the same level, they will someday meet as each grows larger. This doesn't usually happen right away, but can take years or decades, often when the tree should be reaching its greatest



Photo credit: Dick Rideout, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

As a result of being planted too deeply, this large shade tree died from girdling roots below ground decades later. Proper planting can prevent problems like this and the wasteful investment on trees that die prematurely.

value. These “girdling roots” not only constrict movement of nutrients between roots and crown, slowly killing the tree, they also create a weakness at the point of compression that is prone to failure.

If you plant the tree with the top of the soil ball at ground level, it will be too deep! For a variety of reasons, the root flare is often found four or more inches down in the ball. You must find the root flare in the ball and make sure it's at or slightly above grade and then remove excess soil from the top of the ball. There is an excellent on-line video on tree planting developed by arborists, nurseries and

researchers that I strongly encourage you to watch before planting again. It demonstrates how to plant properly and why doing so can add decades to the life of your trees. You can view this 15-minute video by navigating to www.right-treerightplace.com. Click on “Stem Girdling Roots – Video Series.”

Considering all the time, care and expense involved with growing trees in the nursery, and the decades they will hopefully continue to grow and provide value in the landscape, we ought to spend a

few additional moments when planting to ensure we create conditions that will favor long-term tree health. Since a large single street tree can provide tens of thousands of dollars in benefits during its life, premature decline and death is throwing money away. Our goal is not merely survival of trees during a one or two year guarantee period, but growing trees that thrive for perhaps a century or more. Don't short change your investment. Do it right the first time – it's the only chance you'll have!

— David Stephenson

Community Forestry Coordinator



Photo Credit: Courtesy Idaho Dept. of Lands

Woolly masses of tiny insects on the trunk of a subalpine fir or other fir species may indicate infection by the deadly-but-treatable woolly adelgid.



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For address changes, program assistance or additional information, contact Community Forestry Coordinator, Idaho Dept. of Lands, 3780 Industrial Ave. South, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815; 1-800-IDAHO4U = 1-800-432-4648 or 208/666-8621; fax 208/769-1524; e-mail communitytrees@idl.idaho.gov.

Field Contacts

Northern Idaho: Northwest Management, Inc., W. 21 Commerce Dr., Ste. G, Hayden, Idaho 83835. Ph. 208-772-8554 (colla@consulting-foresters.com)

Southwest Idaho: Debbie Cook, C. F. Ass't., 4728 N. Linda Vista Lane, Boise, ID 83704. Ph. 208/378-6576 (Deb939@aol.com).

Southeast Idaho: Gerry Bates, C. F. Ass't., 2445 John Adams Parkway, Idaho Falls, ID 83401. Ph. 208/522-5964 (gabates@cableone.net).

Permission is hereby given to duplicate and distribute this newsletter for educational purposes.

Credit is appreciated.

Little Insects, Big Impact

by Jeffrey Fidgen, State of Idaho Forest Entomologist

The damage caused by the non-native balsam woolly adelgid (BWA) is probably the most misdiagnosed symptom seen on true firs in urban settings. The tiny, 1/25" long, aphid-like BWA lives and reproduces inside a woolly ball that is found on the bark of subalpine and grand fir. High populations of BWA form white woolly masses easily seen on the main trunk of infested trees. The most commonly seen symptom produced by BWA feeding is declining crown health, which can be confused as a typical symptom of root dis-

ease. BWA-induced decline begins with the needles of the inner-most, lower part of the crown turning yellow and then orange. Discolored needles will eventually drop from the trees, producing a noticeable thinning in the affected part(s) of the crown. As the infestation continues, the crown gradually discolors and thins from the inner-most part of the crown outward and upward until very little foliage remains. Discoloration and thinning can occur within 5 years of the tree becoming infested by BWA.

It is vitally important that tree care professionals correctly identify the cause of crown decline seen on fir trees. *Treatments designed to improve crown growth, such as fertilization, may make the BWA problem worse.* Soil or stem injections of imidacloprid prove most successful for control of the BWA. However, a tree making full recovery depends on early diagnosis of this insect. Before deciding on a treatment for this pest, please consult your local extension agent or an entomology expert.

Some Important Links to BWA biology and management

<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/pubs/fidls/bwa.pdf>

http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/PRIVATE_FORESTS/docs/fh/BalsamWoolly.pdf

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb1456/eb1456.html>

Now 3 Consulting Arborists in Idaho

Roger Blanchard of Moscow recently completed training at the American Society of Consulting Arborist's Consulting Academy in Sacramento, California. The intensive, 4-day session is open only to individuals who qualify by having considerable field experience and are able to successfully complete the training session and a series of reports that are graded by a panel of experts. Membership in ASCA is considered by many as the pinnacle of qualifying to provide objective, expert advice about trees. The services offered by ASCA members include tree appraisals, court representation, hazard assessments, problem diagnosis, inventories, education, ordinance development and others. Only three individuals have attained ASCA membership in Idaho. Here is a directory for contacting any of these consultants:

Roger Blanchard	883-1804
Michael Bowman	882-6850
William Josey	788-1611

Phone Before You Dig

Before planting an Arbor Day tree or any other tree, phone to make sure you will not cut or otherwise interfere with any underground utilities. This is a free service. All you have to do is phone 1-800-342-1585. A utility representative will visit the planting site and either mark the location of buried utilities or notify you of restrictions that might be present.

Advisory Council Focuses on Key Messages

The Idaho Community Forestry Advisory Council serves the Idaho Department of Lands and the people of Idaho by providing guidance and volunteer service related to trees in our cities. One of the services is education about trees and tree care with the goal of making Idaho's communities greener and safer. At the Council's January meeting in Boise, a marketing plan was finalized that will help provide more visibility for the importance of 'urban' trees. Specifically, the plan identifies four key messages that will be the focus of information and education efforts over the coming years. These are:

- Urban (or community) forests provide essential benefits we cannot live without.
- A healthy urban forest doesn't happen by chance. It is the result of proper planning, management, and community investment.
- Healthy urban forests can help solve many community problems (e.g. 'calming' traffic, cleaning the air, reducing energy consumption, etc.)
- Urban forests and rural forests are connected; good management of one helps the other.

For more information about the marketing plan or its key messages, contact Gene Gray, Council Chair, 2393 Watts Lane, Payette, Idaho 83661 (208/642-4139) or David Stephenson (see masthead on page 2).

Certified Arborist Numbers are Growing

Arborists who are certified by the International Society of Arboriculture are individuals who work with trees and have demonstrated a high degree of knowledge based on successfully completing a comprehensive exam. To retain their certification, a certain number of continuing education hours must also be completed each year.

Jack McGee, system forester for Idaho Power Company and former member of the Idaho Community Forestry Advisory Council, has been a driving force in our state for preparing candidates for successful completion of the certification exam. Jack is also currently president of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. When Jack became involved in 1993, there were only 5 certified arborists in Idaho. Today there are at least 198. In addition, there are 23 utility specialists, 4 municipal specialist, and 5 certified tree workers.

Cities and counties are urged to make certain that anyone on their tree, street or parks staff with responsibilities for tree care become certified through ISA.

Calendar – Spring/Summer 2007

April 27

ARBOR DAY! Help celebrate!

May 1-2, 2007

Trees, People, & the Law Symposium, Seattle, WA. (Contact The National Arbor Day Foundation at (402) 474-5655 or download registration brochure at www.arborday.org)

May 4-5

Shigo Science – The Science Behind the Treatment, Henderson, NV. (Contact Western Chapter ISA at (714) 639-3610 or visit www.wcisa.net)

June 14-15

Idaho Community Forestry Advisory Council Meeting, Coeur d'Alene, ID (Contact Gene Gray at (208) 739-3443 or geneusmc@srvinet.com).

June 18-20

Urban Wildlife Management National Conference, World Forestry Center Portland, OR. (Contact: National Arbor Day Foundation at (402) 474-5655, or www.arborday.org)

July 28 – August 1

International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference & Trade Show, Honolulu, HI. (Contact: www.isa-arbor.com/conference/)

Sept 15-19

Society of Municipal Foresters Annual Conference, Hollywood, FL. (Contact SMA at (706) 769-7412 or www.urban-forestry.com)

Upcoming Certified Arborist, Municipal Arborist, Utility Arborist, and Certified Tree Worker written Exams

May 17—Orem, UT¹

June 2—Twin Falls, ID – morning exam²

June 16—Boise, ID – morning exam²

Sept 29—Pocatello, ID²

Upcoming Certified Tree Worker Skills Exam

June 16—Boise, ID – morning exam²

¹For information or to register, contact: Utah Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at (801) 446-8229 or email: Lisa@UtahUrbanForest.org.

²For information or to register, contact: Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 503/874-8263 or 217-355-9411 or email: info@pnwisa.org.

Note that applications and exam fees must be submitted at least 12 days in advance of the exam.



University of Idaho

Department of Conservation Social Sciences
University of Idaho
PO Box 441139
Moscow, ID 83844-1139

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Tree tip

Roots – Know Where They Grow

Romanticized art showing tree roots growing beneath the ground like a reflection of the top of the tree just ain't so! More accurately, roots occupy the area where they can receive optimal amounts of oxygen, water, nutrients and growing space. This usually means they spread widely (up to 1 or more times the tree's height) and within a couple feet of the surface.

For a safe, healthy and long-lived tree, respect its roots!

- Avoid digging trenches within the root zone if possible.
- Consider tunneling/boring if underground pipes or conduit must be installed with a tree's drip line zone.
- Reduce or eliminate broadcast spreading or spraying of herbicides over the root zone.

For more information about working around trees, request free literature from the Idaho Department of Lands Community Forestry Program. The address nearest you is in the masthead on page 2.

